



**Town of Herndon, Virginia
Office of The Building Official**

Finished Basement Guidelines

This publication provides guidelines for finishing a basement in an existing single family dwelling in accordance with the 2003 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code. The requirements herein are the most common and are not representative of all conditions you may encounter when finishing a basement.

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PERMITS REQUIRED

You must obtain permits for finishing a basement. Listed below are the types of permits required depending on the complexity of the project. Apply for your permits at the Town of Herndon Department of Public Works, 777 Lynn Street, 2nd Floor, telephone: 703-435-6850.

- **Building Permit** for construction of architectural and structural elements.
- **Electrical Permit** for all electrical installations.
- **Plumbing Permit** for installations of plumbing and gas piping systems.
- **Mechanical Permit** is required to install ductwork and any HVAC alterations in a finished basement.

HELPFUL HINT: You may obtain permits in your own name; however, if a contractor is to perform the work, it is strongly recommended that the contractor secure the permit and be listed as the responsible party. In this way, the Town will be in a better position to assist you in gaining compliance with codes if the work is defective. A contractor must be properly licensed in order to obtain a permit.

BEFORE OBTAINING A PERMIT

Building Code

The Code of Virginia requires that your finished basement comply with the 2003 Virginia Uniform Statewide Building Code (USBC) which incorporates the 2003 International Residential Code (IRC) for residential construction. You may purchase an IRC on line at www.iccsafe.org.

Building Plans

When submitting a building permit application for a finished basement you must submit three copies of a complete plan. A comprehensive set of construction plans must meet the requirements or show the items listed below.

- Minimum scale of 1/4" = 1'-0"; all dimensions must be shown
- Minimum sheet size: 8 1/2" x 11"; no pencil
- Name, address, and occupation of the building designer
- Layout of the finished basement showing rooms, name and function of each area, and dimensions.
- Clearances to furnace and hot water heater and louver locations in furnace rooms.
- Location of stairs, furnace and water heater.
- Electric panelboard location and clearance.
- Location of bathroom exhaust and smoke alarms
- Ceiling height
- **Emergency egress is required for all finished basements and basement bedrooms regardless of when the house was constructed.** However, basements with bedrooms are only required to have emergency egress in the bedrooms. Egress may be attained with a walk-out door or approved window. Show the height of the sill above the finished floor and window opening dimensions. See the Town of Herndon Finished Basement Details for more information.
- A window well for basement emergency egress is required when the sill of the egress window is located below exterior grade. Details must include the following:
 - * All dimensions including length, width and depth.
 - * Ladder details including, width, spacing of rungs, and offset from window well wall
 - * Guard or cover details when window well is more than 30" deep.
 - * Complete set of construction documents adequately detailing structural elements of the window well.
 - * Listing from ICC-ES, UL, or other accredited testing agency and manufacture's specification for prefabricated window wells.
- If a new opening in the basement wall is necessary for emergency egress requirements, details of the alterations must be submitted.

OBTAINING A PERMIT

Permit Process

Bring the construction documents described herein to the Town of Herndon Department of Public Works. 777 Lynn Street, 2nd Floor. Here you will complete a building permit application and trade permit applications if applicable. It will take approximately two weeks for the review process and to have the permit approved and issued. You will receive a phone call as soon as the permit is ready for pick up.

Fees

No fees are accepted until the building permit has been approved and issued. The base permit fee for each permit is \$40.70. Additional building permit fees are calculated at a rate of the estimated construction cost multiplied by .012. You may contact the Department of Public Works at (703) 435-6850 for a complete fee schedule.

AFTER OBTAINING A PERMIT

Inspection Requirements

- A copy of the approved permit and plans must be on the job site and must be available to the inspector during each inspection.
- All close-in and final inspections for building, electrical, and plumbing may be conducted simultaneously.
- Please review the following Inspection Timing Checklist to determine the time and number of inspections required.

INSPECTION TIMING CHECKLIST	
Inspection Type	Requirements Prior To Inspection
	Notes: <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Approval must be obtained prior to proceeding with the next applicable element.2. All inspections are conducted by residential inspectors.
Close-in	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All vents, sewer pipe and/or water pipe to be enclosed must be installed.2. All initial wiring must be complete.
Framing	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Sill plates must be installed and secured.2. Duct work must be installed3. Fire blocking and draftstopping must be installed.4. All subflooring must be installed5. Electrical and plumbing close-in inspections must be approved or complete at the same time as the framing inspection.
Final	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Electrical wiring must be complete2. Appliances, fixtures, outlets, switches, etc. must be installed.3. Plumbing fixtures and piping must be installed4. Roughed-in plumbing fixtures must be permanently capped.5. All work on the approved plans must be complete.6. All floor covering must be installed.7. Emergency egress components must be installed.

Scheduling An Inspection

It is the responsibility of the permit holder or the permit holder's representative to notify the Town when the stages of construction are reached that require an inspection.

Ladders, scaffold, and testing equipment required to complete an inspection must be provided. Inspection requests must be made by calling the Inspections department at (703) 435-6850 between the hours of 8:00am and 4:30pm the business day before you would like the inspection.